

MICHIGAN LEGWORK

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH

HOLIDAY ISSUE NOV/DEC 2008

DLEG to Become DELEG; Stanley “Skip” Pruss Named Director

ON OCTOBER 27, Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm announced a reorganization of state government that aligns all activities related to renewable energy and energy efficiency in one department in an effort to grow the energy sector and create jobs in Michigan.

By executive order, all activities related to the energy sector will be consolidated into the Department of Labor & Economic Growth. The department will be renamed the Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth (DELEG), and its director will be designated the chief energy officer for the state of Michigan. Michigan is now among a growing number of states to have a state department focused on the new energy economy.

Granholm announced the appointment of her special advisor on renewable energy, Stanley “Skip” Pruss, to serve as the CEO and director of DELEG. He replaces Keith Cooley who has accepted a position as CEO of NextEnergy in Detroit. Cooley and NextEnergy will strategically partner with the DELEG to aggressively further the state’s energy agenda.

“The new energy economy is, singularly, Michigan’s greatest opportunity to create thousands of new jobs, attract new investment and diversify our economy,” Granholm said. “By consolidating the state’s energy efforts, we will create an efficient alignment of all the state’s tools and resources to focus with laser-like precision on leading the nation in the new evolving energy sectors.”

The reorganization will include the No Worker Left Behind green jobs training initiatives; Michigan’s new energy efficiency building code; the Public Service Commission and energy efficiency programs; the Office of Sustainability; the Renewable Fuels Commission; and the State Energy Office, all working in tandem with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation’s (MEDC) tax incentives and attraction efforts.

Granholm said the reorganization and the partnership with NextEnergy will allow the state to build strong, collaborative relationships with the private sector and state universities and community colleges, coordinate efforts across state government — eliminating redundancies and inefficiencies — and create new opportunities for research and development centers.

The department will also facilitate the development of advanced energy technologies, which is critical to the state’s efforts to revitalize Michigan’s auto industry by utilizing Michigan’s great strengths in tool and die, metal fabrication and supply chain superiority. Those advanced technologies will enable the industry to develop new powertrains and fuel systems, including electrification capabilities for the coming plug-in hybrids like the Chevy Volt.



Director Skip Pruss presents a certificate of appreciation to Finance Director Al Pohl in recognition of the Finance & Administrative Services Team’s (FAST) completion of DLEG’s budget ahead of all other state departments. This is the 10th year in a row the FAST team has achieved this accomplishment.

Under the order, DELEG will assume responsibility for activities related to the development of renewable fuels and “greening” programs like Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), which assists communities in fostering environmentally sustainable construction. Those programs have been the respective responsibility of the departments of Agriculture and Environmental Quality (DEQ).

“Keith Cooley has provided important leadership in helping our economic plan benefit from channeling both the quality of our workforce and the demand to new workforce development initiatives, such as No Worker Left Behind,” Granholm said. “Keith’s NextEnergy appointment will allow us to seize the opportunities available in the private energy sector. And no one is more capable of being the state’s chief energy officer than Skip Pruss, who knows more about the future of this sector than most anyone in the state.”

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A Message From the Director

I'd like to take just a few minutes to introduce myself to you and let you know how much I'm looking forward to joining the DLEG Team.

As many of you know, I am a longtime public servant. I consider myself fortunate to be able to work for the citizens of Michigan. With the leadership positions I have held in the departments of Attorney General, Natural Resources, Environmental Quality, and the Governor's Office, I believe I have the background and experience to rise to the challenges the Governor has given me.

Gov. Granholm last week sent out a communiqué that outlined how Executive Order 2008-20 adds to the focus of our department's objectives. Many of the activities in state government related to the energy sector will be joined in the new DELEG including efforts to "Green Michigan", develop and deploy sustainable practices, and address climate change. Gov. Granholm and I share the view that the new energy economy is Michigan's greatest opportunity to create new jobs, attract new investment and diversify our economy. Our important objective is to make Michigan a national leader in renewable energy, advanced energy technologies and energy efficiency. Our energy efforts can only be strengthened by the outstanding workforce development, workplace protection, and business service and regulatory competencies our department possesses.

It's an exciting time for Michigan and I'm eager to get started.

As the committed professionals of DLEG, we must all do our part to make Michigan the greatest place to live, play, and work. Our mission is plain, simple, and clear: We need to get businesses to come here, move people who live here into jobs, and for those who are in need of new workforce training and retraining, provide the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to become successful.

My commitment to you is that we will work together to move Michigan forward.

I have nothing but the highest regard for DLEG employees and a keen appreciation of your resolve and commitment to our great state. I look forward to beginning this exciting new journey with you.

Skip Pruss



A Fond Farewell...

After serving as DLEG's director for nearly two years, Keith W. Cooley stepped down on October 27 to accept a position as chief executive officer of NextEnergy, a nonprofit alternative and renewable energy business accelerator located in Detroit's TechTown on the campus of Wayne State University. Going away receptions were held in Lansing on October 30 and Detroit on October 31.



Director Cooley chats with Alison Rodgers and Lynda Robinson of the Division of Media Technology at the Detroit office going away reception.



Well-wishers gather in the Ottawa Building in Lansing to bid farewell to Director Cooley.



Director Skip Pruss shares his thoughts as the newly appointed director of DLEG to members of Leadership Council

MICHIGAN LEGWORK

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Blind Skydivers Leave Stereotypes in the Clouds

By Christine Movalson, Michigan Commission for the Blind

Editor's Note: On Oct. 29, Eight blind skydivers, including six students and two staff members of the Michigan Commission for the Blind Training Center in Kalamazoo, challenged stereotypes of the blind yesterday by diving headfirst out of a plane cruising at 10,000 feet and free-falling to 3,000 feet before opening their parachutes and gliding to a safe landing. None of the jumpers had ever worn a parachute before, and some had never even been in a plane. Each was attached to an experienced member of Skydive Incorporated of Hastings as they dropped into space and went down in tandem to the ground. News of the MCB Training Center skydivers has appeared on news websites throughout the United States as well as on websites in China, Italy, and Great Britain.

Falling felt more like flying when eight blind skydivers let go of their inhibitions and jumped 10,000 feet from an airplane. The exhilarating experience occurred on Wednesday, October 29, 2008, for six students and three staff members (including one sighted staff member) from the Michigan Commission for the Blind Training Center located in Kalamazoo. The brave group faced their fears and left blind stereotypes in the clouds when they plunged through the air and then floated to the ground strapped to professionals from Skydiving Incorporated.

Before the jump, the afternoon was filled with excitement and a contagious eagerness that could be felt by the skydivers and viewing supporters alike! After being rescheduled from Monday, due to wind and weather conditions, anticipation was high.

The skies over Hastings, Michigan, were sunny for the thrill-seekers with much to prove. Their agenda was not only to have fun, but to show both themselves and others that nothing is impossible just because they do not have sight. Chris Egner, 45, Lake Orion, shared, "I have to jump to prove to myself that I can do anything, even if I am blind and a double amputee. There's nothing I can't do." A similar feeling was shared by Laura Brunke, 45, of Bridgman, who said, "I want to face my fears, especially now that I have lost my vision and thought I'd never be able to." Personal triumph was a common theme for the day. For Kristina Richard, 36, of Marquette, "Skydiving is a dream come true, because after my stroke I wasn't sure I would ever walk again." The two senior jumpers in the group wanted not only to satisfy their own appetites, but to set an example. Believed to be the oldest blind individual to have ever skydived, 79-year-old Royal Oak resident Robert Willis stated, "I want to dispel negative stereotypes about visual impairments, as well as inspire others with impairments to get out there in spite of their

handicaps." Also wanting to set an example, John Scott, 61, of Detroit, said, "Skydiving is my fear, and we all need to conquer our fears, no matter what our limitations." The youngest participant, Jacob Warren of Lake Orion, who recently turned 21, had his own set of motivations. Besides looking forward to the adrenaline rush, he announced, "I knew the thought of me jumping would make my family nuts!" Wanting to be supportive staff members, Betty Lujan-Roberts, Marla McClure (the sighted diver in the group), and MCB Training Center Director Christine Boone leapt from the plane as well. They were in agreement, saying of the students, "If they're going, we want to go too!"

High above the landing field, the air was a frigid 15 degrees with 55 m.p.h winds. After a 30-second freefall from 10,000 feet, the daredevils glided approximately five minutes for the remaining 5,000 feet to the airfield below. Christine Boone described her experience: "It was thrilling. I felt like the sun was under me. It was almost as though I was above its glow and warmth."

Jake Warren flew in performing aerodynamic spins and turns, with tears of joy streaming down his face. He declared, "I have never been happier in my life to see the ground. Let's go again!" It was rather cold on the way down for Chris Egner and Robert Willis, both of whom were slightly shaken after landing, but they agreed the experience was an enjoyable and positive one which they would not hesitate to do again. Laura Brunke, who plans to take her two sons and go for it again in the spring, said, "It's frightening, and yet, at the same time, the freest I have ever felt." Skydiving was an enlightening experience for Kristina Richard, who exclaimed, "I've never felt closer to God than I did when I stepped out of the plane." Upon landing, only Kristina can really know what she meant as she repeatedly stated, "Oh, my word in heaven! Oh, my word in heaven!" One individual's jump offered up a moment of trepidation. John Scott described his experience: "At first I felt very stable, almost like I wasn't moving, even with the rushing wind. Then, I had a brief second of fear as a piece of the ripcord came off in my hand. I felt panic until the chute opened and my instructor assured me that all was fine."



Getting ready for the big jump...

(Continued on next Page)

Blind Skydivers Leave Stereotypes in the Clouds

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The Skydiving Team

The glorious day of overcoming obstacles and challenges was a memorable and empowering day for everyone who was present, this writer included. All of the skydivers agreed they would “jump” at the chance to go again should the opportunity arise. The new jumpers were and are an inspiration to many. Their skydiving debut can only be described as a success, as they were a motivating force and had the time of their lives in the process.

A final thought—to truly understand how it feels to fly, you have to spread your wings.

Christine Movolson has just completed her training in skills of blindness at the MCB Training Center. She plans to return to Michigan State University this fall as she continues to pursue a career in writing.

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<<https://www.givelife.org/>>

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UIA to Hold Blood Drive in January

The Unemployment Insurance Agency is continuing our commitment with the Red Cross in offering an after-the-holidays Blood Drive on Thursday, January 21 from 9 am to 3 pm in Room L-150 on the first floor of Cadillac Place.

We will be coming off a holiday period when blood collections are generally low. You ARE NEEDED — not only to help the Red Cross meet its delivery commitments to area hospitals but also to help us keep a safety stock of 3–7 days inventory of each blood type.

You may walk in, but it is preferred that you schedule an appointment — even if on January 21st your work schedule requires you to come at a different time. With more complete scheduling, we can better plan for the donor flow and so serve you more efficiently.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) Rolls Out Long Term Redesign Plan

By Terry Johnson, MRS

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) redesign implementation began October 2008 within the MRS Executive Office. The redesign enables MRS to continue its concentration on strengthening its strategic direction.

The MRS Long Term Plan (2008–2013), is the result of a strategic redesign process which began in 2005. Developing the plan, along with a

new mission and vision for MRS, came from a multitude of data gathered from several sources including an MSU Impact Study, MRS Redesign Council Findings, and a series of formal and informal surveys of MRS staff, partners, and organizations. The results uncovered the need to better align resources to meet shifting customer needs and focus on meaningful employment rather than placement.

MRS has four divisions with deputy director positions in three of the divisions. These, combined with nine rehabilitation consultant positions throughout the four divisions, are designed to develop a more effective service delivery system.

The MRS Executive Team has completed the rollout of the Long Term Planning (LTP) redesign at the district level and with MRS statewide partners. Two public forum statewide partners’ sessions were conducted in Ann Arbor on October 17, and in Shepherd on October 22.



(L to R,) Lou Adams, MRS Deputy Director; Margie Hojara-Hadsell, MRS Division Director, Workforce Improvement/Central & Northern Division; and Jim Bunton, MRS Division Director, Policy & Business Services/Southeast Division, address the Ann Arbor Statewide Partners Session

DLEG to Become DELEG (continued)

As the state's chief energy officer and DELEG director, Pruss will be responsible for promoting the use of renewable energy, the development of advanced energy technologies, and the implementation of energy efficiency measures in the state and serve as an advisor to the governor on matters relating to renewable energy, energy efficiency and other energy matters as requested by the governor.

Pruss has most recently served as special advisor to the governor on renewable energy and the environment. Prior to joining the executive office, he served as deputy director for the DEQ, where he oversaw the environmental services and science, water quality, and land and water management divisions. He began his 26-year tenure in state government as an assistant attorney general,

ultimately serving as the assistant attorney general-in-charge of the Consumer Protection, Anti-Trust and Charitable Trust Division. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Wayne State University School of Law. He resides in St. Johns.

The economic impact of renewable energy is well-documented. The International Energy Agency estimates that more than \$20 trillion will be spent on energy production to meet demand worldwide over the next 25 years. Another study has found that the renewable energy and energy efficiency industries have the potential to generate more than \$4.5 trillion in revenues and create 40 million jobs in the United States by 2030.

BEP Celebrates 25th Anniversary of Highway Vending Opportunities

On October 27 at 9:00 a.m. at the John C. Mackie Welcome Center north of Clare, the Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) and current and former blind highway vending entrepreneurs celebrated the 25th anniversary of highway vending opportunities in Michigan.

During the celebration, MCB State Director Patrick Cannon, spoke on the significance of the anniversary and the impact of the highway vending program on people who are blind and the general public. Ron Marabate, manager of the Consumer Information Services Division, Michigan Economic Development Corporation/Travel Michigan, spoke about the importance of highway vending facilities to Michigan tourism. Constance Zanger, manager of MCB's Business Enterprise Program (BEP), provided a brief overview of the highway vending program in Michigan, with additional comments from Bill Myers, chair of the Elected Operators Committee, and Shane Jackson, chair of the Highway Vending Subcommittee.

Connie Zanger also introduced Gary Parobek, the first highway vending operator in the state of Michigan. Now retired, he operated the Clare vending stand for 21 years (May 1987 to January 2008). He is known for his vending machine innovations, such as ice cream novelties and fresh-ground and individually-brewed servings of premium coffee, which have set the high standard for Michigan's highway vending facilities to the present day. Refreshments were provided by the current Clare vending operator, Bill Lozier. There were donuts and free drinks from the vending machines, including fresh-brewed premium coffee and bottled water.



Constance Zanger speaks to an audience at the Clare welcome center, including visitors, Grand Rapids Area BEP Promotional Agent Patrick Duthie (in black jacket, beside glass door), MCB State Director Pat Cannon, and Sue Luzenski, Management Assistant to Director Cannon



Ken enjoys a moment outside pursuing his favorite hobby, photography.

Welcome to the Employee Spotlight, where we present a randomly-selected DLEG employee who will share a little bit of trivia about him or herself.

**This month's participant is
Ken Vasilnek, Human Resources**

DLEG Employee SPOTLIGHT

Q) How long have you held your current position with DLEG?

A) I'm a personnel administrator in DLEG's/Civil Service's Office of Human Resources (OHR). We have eight staff on our team and I run interference for them. They keep me out of trouble, by processing all the hires, promotions, and personnel actions in DLEG. I've worked in DLEG and its various predecessor agencies including Commerce, Consumer and Industry Services (CIS), and DLEG since 1984.

Q) What do you enjoy most about your job?

A) I enjoy working with and assisting the staff who work in OHR, both here and Detroit. I also enjoy working with my many friends and co-workers in DLEG answering their questions and making things happen for them.

Q) What other jobs have you had before joining DLEG?

A) I transferred to Commerce from Civil Service where I had worked for 10 years. I wrote and managed the Civil Service exams in the state for engineers, surveyors, and all the technical classes for departments like Public Health, the Highway Department and Natural Resources. I managed several sections in Civil Service dealing with statewide hiring. I graduated from MSU in engineering.

Q) What word best describes you?

A) Helpful. If I can't do it I'll help you to find someone who can.

Q) What is your biggest accomplishment (either on the job or off)?

A) A few years ago I was asked to work on changing to the HRMN payroll system. I managed a team of 4-8 staff who worked on all the change management and communication for the project. I enjoyed running the monthly meeting with 50-70 participants in the audience. Off the job: How about a marriage and family together for nearly 30 years! Time flies when you're having fun.

Q) Tell us about your family, any pets?

A) Have a wonderful creative wife Cindy of 29 years, daughter Nicole, 24, also an MSU grad currently in Chicago in her second year of optometry school, son Ryan, 21, in the second year of his culinary program at Grand Rapids Community College, and two cats Milo and Dufus.

Q) What are your hobbies/outside interests?

A) I love photography! You'll never catch me too far from a camera or two. I can spend hours shooting people, animals, scenery, sunsets, rainbows etc. I print and mat and frame my photos.

Q) What was the last book you read?

A) Last week it was the repair manual for our two-year-old oven; the weekend before it was the service manual for the jet skis, and the last book was "Hockey Gods" about the history of Detroit Red Wings organization. Oh yeah, I'm a hockey fan too.

Q) What is your favorite quote or saying?

A) If it ain't broke don't fix it. Between my wife, kids, friends and co-workers, I've got a permanent line of work to keep me busy forever.

Q) Do you have a favorite movie? How about a favorite TV show?

A) Tough question, any spy or mystery drama, maybe Dead Zone, by Steven King starring Christopher Walken. TV... Maybe the Late Late show with Craig Ferguson.

Q) If you could invite three people, dead or alive, to dinner, you'd choose...

A) Someone from music or entertainment, maybe one of the Beatles, Paul McCartney, Carly Simon or maybe a comedian Gilda Radner or Steve Martin. An inventor/scientist like Thomas Edison or artist/inventor like DaVinci or a photographer like Ansel Adams.

PLEASE NOTE:

If you are interested in being a featured employee in a future issue of LEGwork, or would like to suggest a co-worker, please send an email to fagank@michigan.gov

Robert J. Aben, Jr. Elected Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors

Michigan's Chief Boiler Inspector, Robert J. Aben, Jr. was elected chairman of the National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors (NBBPVI) on October 7, 2008. The NBBPVI is a global organization with its headquarters in Columbus, Ohio and is comprised of an elite group of 61 chief boiler inspectors from 45 states, 4 major cities, and 12 provinces.

Robert's experience in the boiler and pressure vessel industry started in 1966, when he joined the United States Coast Guard and served until 1980. During his Coast Guard career, Robert served as engineer on several ship and shore units. From 1980–1989, he was an Authorized Inspector for the Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company where he provided third party oversight for hydrostatic testing, plant construction, quality control, and systems testing at Detroit Edison's Fermi II Nuclear Plant. In 1989, Robert hired on as the Assistant Chief Boiler Inspector with the Bureau of Construction Codes' Boiler Division. In 1990, he became the Chief Boiler Inspector in the State of Michigan, where he remains today.

The history of Michigan's boiler oversight is quite interesting. Most of this generation has been blessed with very few boiler accidents that resulted in injury or death. There have, however, been three accidents since 1989 that have resulted in approximately 15 deaths and countless injuries. The untold story lies in the many accidents that were prevented by the boiler inspection program enforced by Robert and his diligent staff. The history of Michigan's boiler program can be viewed on the Bureau's website.



Bob Aben

MIOSHA Awards \$1 Million for Worker Protection Grants

By: Judith Shane, MIOSHA Communications Director

On October 29, MIOSHA awarded 20 Consultation Education and Training (CET) Grants totaling \$1 million to promote worker safety and health.

"Our 'Best-of-the-Best' Michigan employers have found that protecting their workers is one of the most effective ways to increase productivity and profits," said MIOSHA Director Doug Kalinowski. "These CET Grants will provide companies with strategies that can help them create a safe and healthy work environment where every worker goes home healthy and whole every day." Director Kalinowski made the announcement at FH Martin Constructor's retail development project in Macomb Township. The Construction Association of Michigan (CAM) is one of the CET grantees, and will be providing safety and health training to the workers at FH Martin's worksite.

"I'm proud his store marks the 35th new store or major expansion project FH Martin has completed for The Kroger Company. Despite what we hear in the news, there's still investment being made in this region," said FH Martin President R. Andrew Martin, Jr. "Several hundred people will have worked at this jobsite by the time the store opens, and the most important thing is that each and every one must return home safely to their loved ones each night."



MIOSHA Director Doug Kalinowski (Left w/check) presented a CET Grant check to CAM President Kevin Koehler (Right w/check) at the FH Martin Constructors retail development project in Macomb Township.

Michigan Harvest Gathering Makes Book on it; Food Donations Up 65 Percent

Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) staff at Cadillac Place took a chapter out of fundraising 101 by offering books to those who donated food to the Michigan Harvest Gathering food drive.

On Thursday, October 23, in exchange for donated food items, individuals could select a book from a collection of used books and magazines donated by staff at Cadillac Place.

Dorothy Holmes, an accountant in UIA Central Support, headed up the agency's Harvest Gathering effort at Cadillac Place as well as the book exchange.

"We had books for all ages ranging from children's books to romance novels and from hardcover to paperback," Holmes said.

Holmes happily reported that UIA staff at Cadillac Place increased their food donations to this year's effort by 65 percent over last year's total. The food was donated to the Gleaners Community Food Bank Serving Southeastern Michigan, while the leftover books went to Pro-Literacy Detroit.



Dorothy Holmes, UIA Central Support and UIA's Harvest Gathering coordinator sits behind some of the many books and magazines that staff donated as "gifts" for those who gave food items to the Michigan Harvest Gathering.



The book give-a-way got a jump start from an anonymous donation of these food items.

PSC Harvest Gathering Competition

Once again, the PSC turned the annual Harvest Gathering into a friendly competition. The division that brought in the most canned goods/money was rewarded with a potluck lunch brought in by everyone else.

This year, the winner was the Regulated Energy Division of the PSC.

The grand total of donations was: \$885 dollars in cash donations; \$585 (raised by wearing buttons that allow the donor to wear jeans all week); 1,700 canned and boxed goods to feed the hungry.

Judy Palnau, Michigan Public Service Commission
Please note my new e-mail address: palnauj@michigan.gov

Michigan Harvest Gathering 2008

As part of the Michigan Harvest Gathering, DLEG employees from the Victor Building rolled up their sleeves to collect food and money for the Mid-Michigan Food Bank Council. Under the coordination of Dawn Stiles, 13 boxes of non-perishable food and health items were collected from October 13–24. The generosity of DLEG employees was obvious as monetary contributions added up to \$538!



Erin Riske, Bureau of Workforce Transformation, stands with the boxes of food contributed by DLEG staff in the Victor Building, Lansing.

DLEG Student Assistant Calls Game Show

“Experience of a Lifetime”

Nicole Jurado Armbruster, student assistant with the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority, recently had the “experience of a lifetime” when she participated as a contestant on the popular game show “Who Wants to be a Millionaire.”

In September, Nicole and her husband Andrew flew to New York for the taping of the show. Since then, Nicole was required to keep her performance secret. On November 12 and 13, Nicole’s episodes aired, revealing that although she didn’t become a millionaire, she did end up winning a cool \$25,000—not too shabby for a day’s work.

On “Who Wants to be a Millionaire,” contestants have the chance to win up to \$1 million for correctly answering 12 consecutive multiple-choice questions of increasing difficulty. If at any point the contestant is unsure of the answer to a question, he or she can use one or more “lifelines.” After using lifelines, contestants can either answer the question, use another lifeline, or walk away and keep the money (except for the Double Dip lifeline).

“The experience was fun, but very intense,” Nicole said. “From the moment we arrived at 7:00 a.m., we were in ‘contestant isolation’ and couldn’t even go to the bathroom without an escort.”

After the show’s lawyers explained the show’s many legal issues to the contestants, personal producers met with each contestant to go over all the other rules, including what they could talk about and not talk about, where they could look, and even how they should sit down when they were playing.

“It was very difficult to perform well because of all the rules, plus they added a timer which starts after (host) Meredith Vieira asks the question, not after she finishes reading the answers,” Nicole said. “Luckily I do pretty well under pressure.”

Nicole also felt she got lucky with many of her questions, which included a pop culture question (“What is Danity Kane?”), and a body of water question (“The Mozambique Channel lies in which ocean?”) She was familiar with those categories and knew the answers to both questions (a pop R & B group and the Indian Ocean).

Nicole managed to get to the \$50,000 question with three of her lifelines still intact, but even after using all of them, she was unable to answer the question, “How did Richard Nixon

fund his first Congressional campaign?” Of the four choices (did he sell brushes door to door, collect scrap metal, play high stakes poker or teach students for bar exams?) The answer was poker.

Still, Nicole was thrilled with her winnings and plans to use the money toward a bigger house and a dog for her kids.

“I promised my five-year-old he could pick out the dog’s name, and he’s already decided on the name Shadow,” Nicole said.

In addition to being thrilled with the cash prize, Nicole said the entire experience was positive and amazing.

“Meredith is the nicest, most genuine person, and everyone on the show was so nice and helpful. The other contestants were great and we were all rooting for each other,” Nicole said. “It was a wonderful experience and I feel very, very lucky.”



Photo courtesy of Valleycrest Productions Ltd.

Nicole Jurado Armbruster gives herself a hand after correctly answering a question on “Who Wants to be a Millionaire.”

MCB/MRS/MCDC Joint Leadership Meeting Oct. 28-29



Michigan Commission for the Blind State Director Pat Cannon addresses the audience at the MCB/MRS/MCDC Joint Leadership Meeting.

By Bob Robertson, Michigan Commission for the Blind

On October 28-29, about 100 managers and other leaders from the Michigan Commission for the Blind and Michigan Rehabilitation Services and the Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns met at the Holiday Inn West in Lansing to hear presentations on a number of important topics related to people with disabilities and employment.

The morning session of day one was highlighted by a presentation from DLEG Deputy Director

Andy Levin, who spoke on the No Worker Left Behind Program and the Career Readiness Certificate. In the afternoon, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan presented information on the Michigan Merit Curriculum and the impact it may have on students with disabilities.

On the second day, a panel consisting of people from MRS, Baker College, CVS Pharmacy Workforce Development Programs, and the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship presented information about apprenticeship opportunities in Michigan, explaining how these new programs can benefit clients of MCB and MRS in preparing for and obtaining employment.

MCB Grand Rapids Office Hosts Forum on Transitioning to College or Work

The MCB Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo offices hosted a forum in conjunction with a number of other community-based organizations at the state office building in Grand Rapids on October 23 titled A Forum on Transitioning to College or the World of Work for Students Who Are Visually Impaired. Organizations attending and making presentations were Grand Rapids Community College, Kent Vocational Options, Kent Transition Center, Disability Network Lakeshore of Holland, Disability Advocates of Kent County, Leader Dogs for the Blind of Rochester, Michigan Works! Kent & Allegan counties, the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI), and Disability Student Services of Grand Rapids Community College.

Those attending the forum included 116 people from Grand Rapids, Kent, Ottawa and Allegan counties, including 22 high school students and their parents sponsored by the MCB Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids offices, the Grand Rapids Lions Club, Grand Rapids Public Schools Visually Impaired Program, and Raymond James, Inc.

In attendance representing MCB were Lisa Kiesel, Shannon McVoy, Michelle Visscher, Karyn Silky, and Pat Angerman, who provided information on the referral process to MCB, the College Prep Program, and the Business Enterprise Program.

Food was provided by the Michigan Commission for the Blind Business Enterprise Program and Wealthy Street Bakery.

Diversity Training Gets High Marks From Participants

By Bob Robertson, Michigan Commission for the Blind

On October 20-22, approximately 72 MCB staff and commissioners attended a training program in Lansing entitled "Communicating Across Cultures: Working with Changing Populations in the 21st Century" presented by Carl Flowers and Linda Hedenblad from the Great Lakes Region Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Center at Southern Illinois University. This program was the result of months of planning by the MCB Diversity Team, and some consumer members of that team also participated in the training. Feedback from staff was overwhelmingly positive, with several participants requesting additional training on similar topics.

Michelle Visscher Receives National Margaret Fairbairn Award

Grand Rapids Rehabilitation Counselor Michelle Visscher is the 2008 recipient of the Margaret E. Fairbairn Award, presented annually by the National Rehabilitation Association's Job Placement Division to recognize one individual's outstanding accomplishments and distinguished service in job placement to persons with disabilities.

The national award is usually presented at the national NRA conference, which was held this year in St. Louis, Missouri, October 23-26. Because Michelle had other responsibilities that prevented her from attending that conference, arrangements were made for NRA President Ray Feroz to present the award on November 6 at the Michigan Rehabilitation Conference, held this year at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme. Feroz, a professor in the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitative Sciences at Clarion University in Pennsylvania, traveled to Michigan for the presentation. Michelle was unaware that she'd been nominated for the

award, and she was completely surprised when she was called forward to receive the plaque.

Michelle said, "When it was time for the award presentation, I was thinking of some names of people who might get the award, and I was shocked to hear my own name. Everyone had kept the secret from me. I was told that everyone stood up when my name was announced. It was very moving, and it brought me to tears. It's wonderful to be recognized by my colleagues, and it's very humbling."

In case you think you've heard this story before, it's because last October Michelle received the state-level award: the 2007 Michigan Rehabilitation Association (MRA) Job Placement Division (JPD) Placement Specialist of the Year Award, presented in Grand Rapids.



Ray Feroz, President, National Rehabilitation Association, & MCB Rehabilitation Counselor Michelle Visscher holding her award plaque.

Investing in Abilities Month

By: Terry Johnson, Michigan Rehabilitation Services

October was Investing in Abilities Month, as proclaimed by Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm, and National Disability Employment Awareness month. Each year, Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) staff is encouraged to celebrate the abilities of persons with disabilities in a special way during this month.

MRS Roseville District Office celebrated Disability Awareness on Thursday October 16, 2008. This year the focus was on staff development. The staff enjoyed an "indoor picnic" and a movie. The movie was entitled "Door to Door." This movie spans 40 years of the life of a man with a disability. It chronicled the life of a real-life salesman who was born with cerebral palsy. His pronounced hunched back, shuffling gait and speech impediment made it difficult for him to find employment. He convinced the Watkins Company to hire him by asking for the worse neighborhood route. The highlight of the movie was his being honored the "Door to Door" Salesman of the Year.

MRS Wayne District Office — Disability mentoring took place at the Livonia One Stop on Wednesday October 15. The program theme centered on the employment interview process.

A round table discussion took place. MRS was involved in the planning and facilitation of the event.

Two of our employers participated and MRS counseling staff referred their customers to this event.

Customers have reported to their counselors that they found the program very helpful and it provided useful information as they continue to interview for jobs. Our Michigan Works! partners reported that they found the discussion informative in the area of disclosure of disabilities and felonies and it was helpful to get the employers perspective on this topic.

MRS Lansing District Office — A letter and brochure was mailed to Capital Area employers in recognition of this month's focus on employment of persons with disabilities. MRS was instrumental in providing much of the information in the booklet and an electronic version is available for use. The booklet, "1 in 5: A Practical Hiring Guide," is a hiring guide addressing protocol for hiring people with disabilities.

MRS and Michigan Commission for the Blind, joined together with DLEG Media Technology staff to produce a program highlighting our service to business customers. "The Job Show" program aired in October and featured several employers "telling their stories" about the benefits of hiring and retaining persons with disabilities through MRS and MCB.

Thank You to DLEG Staff From the Family of Tatum Wallace

Tatum Wallace, daughter of Curt Wallace, Office of Financial and Insurance Regulation, lost her battle with bone cancer on October 4, 2008, at 10 years of age. Curt had the following words of thanks for his co-workers:

I would like to thank all of you from my family for the support we received in Tatum's fight until the end... for the numerous prayers and words of encouragement, some from individuals we have never met and some from other states... for the financial donations which helped provide her with medicines that helped prolong and aid in her fight. Your support and prayers also aided Tatum's mother and me during our darkest moments during her fight, lifting us up to try and have the courage and strength she possessed. Your prayers and friendship helped us find that strength when the times were the darkest, as they are now. You have all helped more than you will ever know.



work, because if it did not I would already be dead." It floored all of us, to hear this coming from a 10-year-old child. Tatum knew in her heart that all the prayers and support from all of you were helping her in her fight and because of this support she lived longer, and we enjoyed her love and laughter for longer. Though we were robbed of a precious child, we were given unconditional friendship and support and I just wanted to thank you once again for helping give my daughter the strength and prayer to fight. She didn't lose her fight, we lost our angel, our baby.

In all the pain and loss in this world, please know your kind words and thoughts and actions helped in more ways than any of you will know. Thank you all for the continued support and friendship. We will never stop missing our baby girl just as we will never forget the kindness and friendship and support you all provided us and still do. Thank you for helping my daughter. Even in all the pain and loss, it's heartening to know that there is genuine friendship and compassion still strong in this world.

Most of all I would like to share a story in how all of you helped Tatum. Last summer Tatum's sister Paige and her mother were arguing about going to church. Paige's stance was "why go, the prayers don't work as the cancer is back." What they did not realize was that Tatum was in the bathroom getting ready for church and heard her. Tatum came storming out of the bathroom in the way only she could and announced with conviction, "Yes Paige, prayer does

I just have one final request: as you have all shown my family so much about the power of prayer, could you please pray for the Gordon family. Brandon Gordon (15 years) has the same exact cancer as Tatum, same leg and everything. In fact, his sister was a classmate of Tatum's. Brandon can beat this, he travels to Texas monthly for a special chemo that wasn't available soon enough for Tatum to try. Please keep him in your prayers.

DLEG Employees Ready to Face Flu Season Lansing Staff Take Advantage of Flu Clinic

The 2008 Flu Clinic was a great success with 252 people receiving a vaccine.

The Ottawa Building Flu Clinic was held on Wednesday, October 29. The clinic was organized by Keli Edmonds of the DLEG Communications Office. Keli scheduled a total of 274 employees, their spouses and children, with 252 individuals actually receiving their vaccine. The number of recipients receiving a flu shot this year was up from the 2007 count of 218.

Keli would like to recognize and send a BIG THANK YOU to Karin Eirosius, Brenda Perry, Helen Stickney, Alice Wood, Lynn Simons, Eva Gross and Sharon Malone for volunteering to help the nurses throughout the day. You all show great DLEG team spirit.



Consumers, Accident Survivors Speak Out at Insurance Affordability Public Hearings

Michigan's Automobile and Homeowner Insurance Consumer Advocate Butch Hollowell held four public hearings around the state of Michigan recently to hear from consumers and industry experts about the affordability of auto insurance and oversight of the industry.

The purpose of the Auto Insurance Affordability hearings was to receive testimony from consumers, industry experts and other stakeholders to address two basic questions: 1) Are Michigan's auto insurance rates affordable?, and 2) Has Michigan's deregulation of the insurance industry allowed for adequate oversight of auto insurance rates?

More than 250 citizens attended the hearings, which were held in Grand Rapids, Bay City, Detroit and Marquette. Expert testimony was provided by consumer experts as well as representatives from the insurance industry.

"Michigan has some of the highest rates in the nation," Hollowell said. "It is critical that the public and key stakeholders have an opportunity to share their experiences, which will be helpful in developing recommendations on ways to get rates down and increase accountability."

Testimony received at the hearing will inform the advocate's recommendations for auto insurance reform, to be contained in the advocate's Annual Report to the Governor. The Executive Order creating the advocate position requires the

Annual Report to contain recommendations for administrative, legislative, or other corrective actions that would positively affect the interests of automobile insurance consumers.

Some of the comments received by citizens included:

"Mr. Hollowell, I'm very comforted to know that there's an insurance advocate looking over the insurance companies and their business practices. It has been a long time coming."

"Thank you for putting this hearing on and giving us a chance to voice our concern."

"Thank you very much for having this hearing this afternoon and for all the work that you're all doing."



Auto accident survivor Kelly Myers reads her testimony at the Grand Rapids hearing.



National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Detroit Branch President Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony, Insurance Advocate Butch Hollowell, Focus: HOPE co-founder Eleanor Josaitis and Office of Financial and Insurance Regulation (OFIR) Commissioner Ken Ross make up the panel at the Detroit hearing.

Make the Intranet Part of Your Morning

Do you want the latest scoop on DLEG news in between LEGwork editions? If so, make a visit to the DLEG Intranet as routine as your morning cup of coffee. Check out <http://connect.michigan.gov/dleg> where you'll find the latest DLEG information including:

- News from the DLEG Director, Executive Office and Human Resources, Gongwer
- DLEG Organization Chart
- State employee discount programs
- Employee events and contests
- Fun photos of DLEG employees and their loved ones
- DLEG Suggestion Box
- Various DLEG Polls

When you visit the site, be sure to log in or you might be missing out on information on the Intranet. If you need help with username and password, contact dleg-ohrinfo@michigan.gov

Don't worry if you forgot your password — Click login, then click "Forgot My Password." A new password will be e-mailed to you. Copy and paste into password area. Once you are logged in go to "My Account" and update your password.

UIA Tax Enforcement Uses Teamwork to Help Others

By Tina M. Alagna, Manager, Tax Enforcement Unit



Tax Enforcement staff work as a team in backing their colleagues and the charities they support. The team includes (back row, l-r) Janet Godlew, Donald Chambers, Lynne Bryant and Stacey Miller; seated: Jerome Solomon, Vanessa Brown and Tina Alagna. Jerome and Tina are sporting the medals they earned for running in their October marathons. (Not pictured is Rennie Wardzinski.)

The staff in the Unemployment Insurance Agency's (UIA) Tax Enforcement Office believes in teamwork, especially teamwork in support of a good cause. And this fall, the unit has worked as a team in support of several good causes.

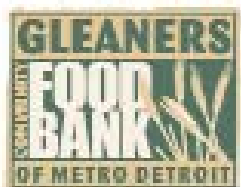
Lynne Bryant, for example, recently collected money from her co-workers to support her favorite charity, the Gleaners Food Bank. The team also plans to sponsor a local family-in-need during the holidays.

With the backing of the entire Tax Enforcement team, Jerome Solomon, Vanessa Brown, and

Tina Alagna, manager of Tax Enforcement, put their feet to work in support of their charities.

Jerome ran a full marathon on October 12. He also serves as the team's mentor in promoting a healthy lifestyle. Vanessa, a breast cancer survivor, walked three miles in the "Making Strides for Breast Cancer" walk on October 18. All proceeds went toward breast cancer awareness and toward finding a cure. Tina ran the Detroit Free Press 13-mile half-marathon. She ran for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, in hopes the organization will help find a cure for those afflicted with MS including her recently diagnosed sister.

Every member of the Tax Enforcement team, including Donald Chalmers, Stacey Miller, Janet Godlew, and Rennie Wardzinski, supported the fund-raising efforts of their co-workers.



Lynne Bryant holds a letter of thanks from the Gleaners Food Bank for the team's recent donation.



Dave Synk (left) and Andy Vanchick wear the medals they captured for finishing first in the MESC Golf League in 2008.

UIA Golf League Held its Annual Outing

By Dave Synk, Manager, UIA Oakman Multi-Service Center

The MESC Golf League held its annual golf outing on September 26 — a picture perfect day — at the Plum Brook Golf Club in Sterling Heights.

The team of Andy Vanchick, DIT, Agency Services Support, and Dave Synk, manager, UIA Oakman Multi-Service Center, was honored for finishing first in the league during the year and received Olympic-like gold medals. Andy was also the league's "most improved player" and was credited by Synk for the pair's first place finish. In addition, Andy was the best golfer at the outing, topping off a pretty good year on the links.

R.J. Poulin, a UIA retiree, captured "best golfer of the year" trophy, even though he only picked up the game seriously after retiring in 2002.

Twenty-eight golfers participated in the league's 40th annual outing, including many retirees, staff from the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA), and staff from other state agencies. The league was originally formed by staff at the former Michigan Employment Security Commission (MESC).

Michigan Liquor Control Commission Wishes Everyone a Safe and Happy Holiday Season

By Andrea Miller, Michigan Liquor Control Commission

As office holiday parties and family gatherings are getting underway for millions of people throughout the state, the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) are reminding legal purchase age adults who choose to enjoy a drink to do so safely this holiday season. Although alcohol is enjoyed responsibly by the vast majority of legal-age adults, some individuals abuse or choose to consume it before they are of legal age.

"If alcohol is a part of your celebration, keep in mind that 65 percent of kids get their alcohol from friends and family," said MLCC Chairperson Nida R. Samona. "With older siblings home from college or visiting family in town for the holidays, it is even more tempting and easier for kids to obtain and consume alcohol."

Here are some tips from www.drinksmart.com to safely and responsibly enjoy your holiday season:

- Think in terms of "standard drinks"—not number of drinks. One 12-ounce beer contains the same amount of alcohol as one 5-ounce glass of wine and one 1.5-ounce shot of spirits. So, that 32-ounce beer isn't "just one beer" anymore than a Grande Margarita is "just one drink."
- Take control—have a plan and stick to it. Order your own drinks to control what's in them, and remember that no one can force you to have "just one more"—or even one, for that matter. Drink plenty of water to remain properly hydrated. When you reach your pre-set limit, stop drinking.
- Don't refill your glass before you've finished it. If you keep refilling before you're done, how will you know how many "standard drinks" you've had? That can make for a dangerous and inaccurate calculation of your alcohol consumption.
- Never drive drunk. While it's perfectly acceptable to enjoy a cocktail within the legal, and your own personal, limits, don't ever "guess" or take unnecessary risks. If you are at all unsure about your ability to drive safely, make alternative arrangements: ask a friend to drive you home, or take a cab.

"There are serious health and safety issues which we strive to protect, please be responsible this holiday season," said Samona.

For more information about responsible consumption, visit www.drinksmart.com or visit The Century Council website at www.centurycouncil.org.

TOP TEN MYTHS ABOUT ALCOHOL

- 1 MYTH: Alcohol improves my sexual performance.**
FACT: Although you may think that drinking makes you better in bed, physiologically alcohol reduces your performance.
- 2 MYTH: I can drink and still be in control.**
FACT: Drinking impairs your judgement, which increases the likelihood that you will do something you'll later regret such as having unprotected sex, being involved in date rape, damaging property, or being victimized by others.
- 3 MYTH: Drinking isn't all that dangerous.**
FACT: One in three 18-24 year-olds admitted to emergency rooms for serious injuries are intoxicated. And alcohol is also associated with homicides, suicides, and drownings. It takes about 3 hours to eliminate the alcohol content of two drinks.
- 4 MYTH: I can sober up quickly if I have to.**
FACT: Depending on your weight. Nothing can speed up this process—not even coffee or cold showers.
- 5 MYTH: It's okay for me to drink to keep up with my boyfriend/husband.**
FACT: Women process alcohol differently. No matter how much he drinks, if you drink the same amount as your boyfriend/husband, you will be more intoxicated and more impaired.
- 6 MYTH: There is no point in postponing drinking until I'm over 21.**
FACT: Research shows that the longer you postpone drinking, the less likely you are to ever experience alcohol-related problems.
- 7 MYTH: I can manage to drive well enough after a few drinks.**
FACT: About one-half of all fatal traffic crashes among 18 to 24 year olds involve alcohol. Your impairment is related to your blood alcohol concentration (BAC). Depending on your weight, you can have a BAC of 0.02% after only one drink, which can slow your reaction time and make it difficult to concentrate on two things simultaneously. A BAC of 0.03% can significantly impair your steering. At 0.04% your vision begins to focus on the center of the road and you cannot respond as well to street signs, traffic signals and pedestrians. By 0.05% your driving will be noticeably erratic, especially to the police.
- 8 MYTH: I'd be better off if I learn to "hold my liquor"**
FACT: If you have to drink increasingly larger amounts of alcohol to get a "buzz" or get "high," you are developing tolerance. This increases your vulnerability to many serious problems, including alcoholism.
- 9 MYTH: I have to drink to fit in.**
FACT: Your peers don't drink as much as you think they do. A recent survey of more than 44,000 college students shows that most students drink little or no alcohol on a weekly basis.
- 10 MYTH: Beer doesn't have as much alcohol as hard liquor.**
FACT: A 12-ounce bottle of beer has the same amount of alcohol as a standard shot of 80-proof liquor (either straight or in a mixed drink) or 5 ounces of wine.

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
Michigan Liquor Control Commission

Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) Staff News

Erin Reynolds Participates in River Run

Erin Reynolds, daughter of Sally Postal, MCB receptionist, completed the Capital City River Run half marathon at her training pace of 10 miles per hour.

She had trained for the last three months, no easy accomplishment while raising an eleven-month-old daughter.

Also in the picture above with Erin is her daughter, Anna Leigh, and Erin's husband, Associate Pastor Eddie Reynolds (of Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Lansing).

Baby on the Way!

Detroit Rehabilitation Counselor **Shawnese Laury-Johnson**, is expecting her second child sometime in February. Bob Robertson has suggested that in the spirit of teamwork and inclusion, staff should submit suggestions for a name. Bob has suggested Robert or Roberta.

He Will be Missed...

Former MCB staff member **Tony van Staveren** passed away at age 60 at his home in Gaylord on September 11. Born in Monster, the Netherlands, Tony was one of a family of 13 that immigrated to the US in 1957. The family settled in Adrian, where Tony attended Catholic Central High School. Tony continued his education at Jackson Community College, where he received an associate's degree, and at Western Michigan University, where he received both a bachelor of science and a master of arts degree. In 1980 Tony moved to Gaylord to open the Michigan Commission for the Blind office, where he worked as a rehabilitation teacher and counselor for the visually impaired until he retired in 2004.

MIOSHA Halloween Harvest Food Gathering

By: **Debbie Merryfield**, Department Analyst, FOIA Section

Each year, MIOSHA staff goes trick-or-treating for non-perishable food items on Halloween. This year, a few favorite creatures and characters marched from cube to cube to gather delicious goodies for the Lansing Area Food Bank to help out with the upcoming holiday season. Nearly all MIOSHA staff participated and hundreds of food items were collected!



Erin Reynolds holds up her half-marathon medal, standing beside her husband and daughter.



Shellene Boyd (holding Patrick Merryfield), Debbie Merryfield, Judith Shane, Nancy Lampman and Katie Benghauser



Debbie Merryfield (holding Patrick Merryfield), Mary Ann Pianosi, Samantha Birsén, Nancy Lampman, Shellene Body, Debbie Paris, Connie Thelen, Katie Benghauser.

October was a “Rainy” Month at the Detroit RICC with Two Baby Showers

By Haili Brown, UIA

Two baby showers were held at the Detroit Remote Initial Claims Center (RICC) in October. On October 3, Shermita Mitchell’s co-workers celebrated her pregnancy, and Loutricia Willis was showered with gifts and warm wishes by her co-workers on October 17.

Since then, Shermita gave birth to Iyana Arrolynn on Sunday, October 26. Iyana weighed 6 lbs. 4 oz. and 19.5 inches long. Mother and baby are doing fine. Loutricia’s baby hasn’t made her appearance yet, but she is expected to arrive any day now.



Expectant mothers Loutricia Willis and Shermita Mitchell show off their round bundles of joy.



(l-r) Dayo Howze, Janice Cosey, Donna Killen, Loutricia Willis, Haili Brown and William Carpenter (background) enjoy Loutricia’s baby shower.

MERC Employees Give Back

Nino Green, Michigan Employment Relations (MERC) Commissioner: Nino is an attorney living in Escanaba, and is chairperson of Legal Services of Northern Michigan, an agency providing free legal services to low income families and individuals.

Christine Derdarian, MERC Chairperson: Christine is an attorney living in Bloomfield Hills, and serves on the Board of Spectrum Human Services. She also is a board member of the Michigan Women’s Studies Association and the Oakland Mediation Center.

Richard Ziegler, MERC Mediator: Rich is the vice president of the Wixom Goodfellows, and also serves as a volunteer mediator for the Oakland Mediation Center. In addition, he serves as council member of the Wixom City Council and is currently the deputy mayor of Wixom.

James Amar, MERC Mediator: Jim serves as the treasurer of the Monsignor Clement H. Kern Foundation. Donating to many charitable organizations such as Focus Hope and the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Kern Foundation also provides financial assistance to persons who may have lost shelter due to fire or other natural events.

Maria Greenough, MERC Court Reporter: Maria serves as a docent for Cranbrook House and Gardens Auxiliary, giving both public and private tours of Cranbrook House from May through December. She also participates in fundraising activities in support of Alternatives for Girls, a Detroit organization that helps homeless and high-risk girls and young women make positive choices in their lives.

Butch Hollowell, playing Joe, ponders his plight as a homeless man with a pregnant wife.

A photograph showing a group of people on a stage. On the left, a man in a grey t-shirt and black pants stands holding a large drum. In the center, a person in a white and blue outfit is seated. To their right, a person in a white and blue outfit is seated. Further right, a person in a yellow and black patterned outfit is seated. On the far right, a person in a brown coat and hat is standing. The background is dark, and the stage is lit.

The entire cast gathers on the stage for the final scene of “The Birth of Baby Hey-Zeus.”

DLEG Employees Showed Their Creativity and Spirit This Halloween

The three winners received a cash prize in addition to being recognized for creative costumes. Costume wearers were entitled to trick or treating through the office halls, and cider and doughnuts were available to all staff.



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UIA Call Centers Handle 40 Percent Increase in Calls Due to Federal Benefit Extension

By Jan Harlin, Sharon Moffett-Massey and Bob Zaborowski, RICC Directors, UIA

Staff at the Unemployment Insurance Agency's (UIA) Detroit, Grand Rapids and Saginaw Remote Initial Claims Centers (RICC) was treated to pizza lunches in October and given a paper weight to remind them of the important role they played in providing exceptional customer service while responding to the new federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program.

Since EUC's implementation in July, Work Distribution staff, based in the Grand Rapids RICC, processed 120,149 EUC applications on top of their normal high work volume.

Additionally, RICC staff handled a 40 percent increase in the number of phone calls. The agency reported that RICC staff handled nearly 572,000 phone calls from June through August, a 163,000 increase over the same period in 2007.

"It's Hammer Time" for Two at the Lansing PRO

Cindy Curtis and Melinda McCullough answered the call for help, when ABC-TV's popular show "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" sought volunteers for a home makeover project in the Lansing-area town of Holt.

The television show with its cast of designers, local contractors, workers and volunteers makes over homes within a week for deserving families from across the country that require a helping hand.

In this case, the ABC show chose a Holt family because the father, who was a nurse at a local hospital, had contracted hepatitis C seven years ago and died from the disease in January 2008, a month after his wife had been laid from her job. With no husband, no father, no job, a house that had fallen into disrepair and three young sons, the family needed help.

Cindy and Melinda, along with 1,600 others from the area, volunteered to work on the project. The two, who work at the Unemployment Insurance Agency's Lansing Problem Resolution Office, said they saw a story in the newspaper about the project and responded to an email address for those who wanted to lend a hand.

The week-long project began on Sunday, September 28, with the demolition of the existing home and the pouring of cement for the foundation. On Monday, the framing went up and trusses were set and work continued until Friday, October 3, when the family received the keys to their brand new 3,300 square foot, four-bedroom home.

Cindy worked on the project from 5:00 a.m. to noon on Monday, September 29. She checked in volunteers, contractors, vendors and media representatives.

"I got to make runs to the actual location and, in the seven hours I spent volunteering, they built it from the base-moment foundation to setting the rafters," Cindy said. "It was amazing!"

Melinda worked the Monday afternoon shift from noon to 6:00 p.m. and made sure that the construction crews had plenty of liquids. She also helped with the clean-up and watched the VIP tent to ensure that spectators did not wander in.

Both women were glad to be part of the project.

"What moved me to become part of the project was the opportunity to help a family that was right here in the community," Melinda said. "It's an awesome feeling knowing that I am giving back to a great project."

Cindy said, "The whole experience was very rewarding, and I felt blessed to be part of it. Everyone was there to help that family. The volunteers, contractors and everyone involved were very friendly and excited to be a part of it."



UIA Director Stephen Geskey offers his congratulations to the Grand Rapids RICC staff for their work during the EUC start up.



Staff line up to choose their Good Humor ice cream treat as part of the Detroit RICC's observance of Customer Service Week and in recognition of their efforts in recent months.



Melinda McCullough (left) and Cindy Curtis, UIEs at the Lansing PRO, did not swing a hammer when they volunteered for the "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" project in Holt, but they did get really cool T-shirts.



On the Move

UIA Fills Four Managerial Posts

The Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) recently filled four mid-level manager positions. Three of the jobs are within Benefit Services and the fourth is in the Office of Management Services.

In Benefits Services, **Sue Easton** is the new manager of Federal Programs & Procedures; **Yukima Everett** is the manager of Quality Assurance; and **Debbie Lychack** is the UIA project manager. **Sheila Murff** was named director of Central Support. All four appointments became effective on Monday, October 6.



Yukima Everett

A UIA employee since 1992, **Sue Easton** had been manager of Benefit Systems Control in the UI Tech & Data Control prior to her new appointment. In her new position, she will oversee the agency's Procedures, Combined Wage Claim and Trade Readjustment Allowances programs.

Yukima Everett began her career in state government in the early 1980s when she joined the MESC as a fraud investigator following a two-year stint as a patrol officer with the Detroit Police Department. Most recently, Yukima had been the acting manager of Federal Programs & Procedures.

As manager of Quality Assurance, Yukima will oversee the Benefit Accuracy Measurement, Benefit Overpayment Control and Benefit Overpayment Collection programs.

A career civil servant, **Debbie Lychack** had been working for the Connecticut Department of Labor before joining Michigan's Department of Career Development 10 years ago.

She had been working on the America's Talent Bank project for which Michigan had the funding. Once the project ended, Debbie accepted a position with the State of Michigan to work on the state's Talent Bank project. Prior to becoming UIA's project manager, Debbie was a project manager with the Department of Information Technology.



Debbie Lychack

As UIA project manager, Debbie will provide management oversight to various UIA projects, including the agency's forthcoming System Rewrite Project.

A state of Michigan employee for the past 32 years, **Sheila Murff** started her career as a secretary with the Michigan Council for the Arts. She later moved to the Commission on Arts in Public Places as an office manager. In 1989, she joined MESC's Data Processing area to help resolve software and hardware acquisition issues. She later became chief of procurement. Most recently, she worked in UIA's Central

Support area, handling purchasing, inventory, telecommunications, copiers and computers.

As director of Central Support, Sheila will supervise the agency's budgeting, purchasing, telecommunications services as well as special project support to agency operations and new initiatives.



Sheila Murff

On the Move

UI Manager Vico Botello Retires After 31 Years

By Jeremy Bigelow, UIE, Saginaw RICC

Vico Botello, one of the true veterans at the Saginaw Remote Initial Claims Center (RICC), retired on September 30 after 31 years of service.

He began his career in 1977 at the Lansing office of the Michigan Employment Security Commission working in the disabled veterans program. In 1988, Vico moved to the Employment Service (ES) as an ES interviewer in the Work Incentives Now (WIN) Program, helping youth and the handicapped to find work.

Vico was later promoted to ES supervisor in the Flint MESC office. He worked there for 12 years until the ES and UI programs were split. He then joined the RICCs and last served as a UI manager in Saginaw.

Vico's plans for retirement include doing missionary work and spending time with family and friends.



Vico Botello holds up a congratulatory cake, marking his retirement after 31 years of state service.



The Grand Rapids RICC Welcomes New Staff

By Marianne Holst, Manager, Grand Rapids RICC

The Unemployment Insurance Agency has added staff to its operations in Grand Rapids. The Work Distribution Center (WDC) put on several general office assistants (GOAs), while four new unemployment insurance examiners (UIEs) joined the Remote Initial Claims Center. Three of the new UIEs had worked for the WDC.



The four new UIEs are (l-r):
Travis Decker, Tony Shellman, Sue Howe, and Heather Slocum.



Five new GOAs joined UIA's Work Distribution Center. They are (l-r) Beth Campbell, Amy Cornwell, Roberta Friedt, Todd McMyler, and Norma Padilla



Lasha Murray

On the Move

W&H Welcomes New Investigator

On November 3, **Lasha Murray** joined the Wage & Hour Division as an investigator based at the division's Livonia office. She fills a vacancy created by Lisa Gould's recent promotion to regional manager. Lasha joins the division from the Michigan Department of Treasury. She is a graduate of Colorado Technical University with a degree in criminal justice.

In addition to starting her new job, Lasha also started a new life by getting married on Halloween, October 31, just days before joining Wage & Hour.

Division Director Jack Finn offered his thanks to the interview committee of Jennifer Fields, Lisa Gould, Jill Hookey and Edgar Rainey and to analyst Troy Smith for his help in narrowing down the field of candidates from approximately 100 who applied, and for his help in setting up the interviews and securing background checks.

Michigan Commission for the Blind Staff News

Judy Terwilliger returned to full-time work as secretary in the Gaylord office. During her absence, **Shirley Samkowiak** was on duty as the office's temporary secretary, and her assistance was very much appreciated.

On October 6, **Shig Toda** welcomed a new intern. Her name is **Brenda Cuddeback** and she is a rehabilitation teaching student at Western Michigan University. Brenda is also in the rehabilitation counseling program at WMU and will be doing her rehabilitation counseling internship following her rehabilitation teaching internship. Brenda will be working with Shig on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays through April.

Detroit Rehabilitation Teacher **Betty Rush** is back in the office after an extended hospital stay and recovery at home. Betty said in an email note to staff, "I have returned to work, in large part, due to your prayers and cards."

Sue Anderson, secretary in the Escanaba office, is currently on medical leave, and **Linda Isetts** is the temporary secretary in Sue's absence. Linda has previously covered as a secretary in the Escanaba office.

New Rehab Counselor: Dan Furton

Dan Furton is the new rehabilitation counselor in the Michigan Commission for the Blind Lansing regional office, as of November 17. Dan will work with MCB clients in Washtenaw, Hillsdale, Jackson and Lenawee counties. Dan completed his M.A. in Rehabilitation Counseling at Michigan State University, and he has previous experience with MCB.

We Get Letters ... and Emails!

We all know DLEG is filled with employees who go above and beyond the call of duty every day, but often we never hear about it. If you or someone you work with has received a phone call, email or letter of praise for exceptional customer service, please forward it to LEGwork editor Kathy Fagan, who will make sure it appears on the "We Get Letters and Emails" page of the next issue. This is your chance to blow your own horn or recognize a co-worker for a job well done!

UIA gives a pleasant surprise

Kathleen Grove, an unemployment claims examiner (UIE) at the Unemployment Insurance Agency's Problem Resolution Office (PRO) in Gaylord, shared this recent experience with a claimant for federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation:

"We had a claimant come into the Gaylord PRO. He was extremely frustrated and didn't know where to turn. He wanted to file for the EUC and was reluctant to use the phone. We assisted him in using the telephone system, and he was connected with Maria Burgdorf, a UIE at the Saginaw Remote Initial Claims Center. He said Maria was so kind, and she took the time to make sure he knew exactly what he needed to do and what to expect. He said he was pleasantly surprised by such a positive experience."

Baker College says thanks

Recently, Dawn Johnson, an unemployment insurance examiner with the Unemployment Insurance Agency spoke before a group of human resource staff at Baker College. She received the following note of thanks from Debbie Hintz, a business officer at the college.

"I wanted to let you know how we appreciated your taking time out of your busy schedule to give us a presentation on unemployment. It was very helpful and informative. Thanks."

Brenda Rose, a departmental technician in the Wage Record Unit at the Unemployment Insurance Agency, received a message of thanks from an employer who appreciated her assistance with an amended wage detail report:

"Your help today is greatly appreciated. It was a pleasure dealing with you, and you quickly put my fears to rest. You have excellent customer service skills, and I hope that you are recognized for this."

Tammy Symborski, an unemployment insurance examiner at UIA's Saginaw Remote Initial Claims Center, shared this positive feedback she recently received from an unemployed worker:

"I had a claimant on the phone that was grateful for me taking the time to help him understand how unemployment works. He commended me for being so caring, and he wanted me to transfer the call to my manager. He wanted to make sure that

he knew how appreciative he was for the time and help that I gave him."

The world needs more people like Irma Wakefield an unemployed worker recently wrote to the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA). An unemployment insurance examiner (UIE) with the UIA, Irma often speaks at Rapid Response and worker orientation meetings and is a member of UIA's speakers' bureau. The writer wrote:

"Mrs. Wakefield has shown me that she will seek the proper information to complete the situation that is brought before her. And she includes the right people to bring hope to us that need them to solve the problems we face alone. We need more people like Mrs. Wakefield to continue to help us. . ."

Another unemployed worker found UIE Irma Wakefield to be very professional and pleasant in her contacts with him. He wrote:

"She was so professional in explaining my claim and so pleasant to talk to. She makes you feel comfortable when asking questions and answers them so patiently. She has a wonderful personality."

Dave Corcoran, site manager of the Bay City Michigan Rehabilitation Services office, received gracious praise about several rehabilitation counselors whose clients had completed their program:

A client of Gary Holik's said, "Without the help I received from your agency and Gary, I am afraid of where I might be today. Gary encouraged me at some of the worst times and helped me tremendously."

One of Dennis Fisk's clients said, "Dennis and his staff were fantastic. They have really gone the extra mile to help me get started. Now the rest is up to me."

A client of Alexa Matthews said, "Alexa guided me with much wisdom and compassion, so I am most grateful. I experienced nothing but kindness by everyone including the receptionist at Midland. If Midland Rehabilitation had not helped me, I would not be as far along as I am today with improvement. I now know where to obtain continued care."

Paul Kuehl had an appreciative client say, "I was taken care of promptly and Paul was very helpful and kept on top of everything. He was right there for me, explained everything and kept in contact to make sure I was satisfied."

